

Children Under Age 18 Living in Poverty

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program.

Definition: The number of children ages 0–17 living in families with total household income below the poverty level.

Limitations: Estimates exclude children living in military families and children who do not reside in families—for example, children living in orphanages, juvenile detention facilities, schools for the deaf and blind, long-term hospitals, and boarding schools.

The official poverty threshold varies only by age of the household head (under and over age 65), and family size. There is no differentiation for the cost of living from one area or region of the country to another

Data Detail: Poverty estimates are made using statistical modeling techniques. Current poverty data are estimated from five symptomatic indicators: (1) federal income tax returns, (2) Food Stamp program participation rates, (3) the number of Supplemental Security Income program recipients, (4) Bureau of Economic Analysis income data, and (5) poverty data from the most recent federal decennial census.

The SAIPE program began in the mid-1990s as a response to a Congressional mandate. When Congress re-authorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1994, they included a provision requiring that current poverty data for children be used in allocating funds to school districts.

The poverty estimates are open to challenge from the public. The challenge period for the 2001 and 2002 poverty estimates released in November 2004 extends to March 7, 2005. After that date the Census Bureau will no longer accept challenges. But up until that point, it is possible (although not very likely) that one or more of the poverty estimates will be changed as a result of a successful challenge.

For More Information:

For information about the SAIPE program, see:
www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe/

For general information about poverty, see:
www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html